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Taiwan

Agricultural Situation

Taiwan Response to Questions on Cloning 2008

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Report Highlights:

This report contains responses to the questions raised in USDA 690186.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Trade Report
Taipei [TW1]
[TW]

Ref: USDA FAS 690186

In response to an action request the Agricultural Affairs Section of the American Institute in Taiwan met with representatives of the Bureau of Food Safety of Taiwan's Department of Health (DOH) to determine the status of Taiwan's regulatory policy considerations for cloned animals and their offspring. During the discussion, DOH responses indicated that this issue is currently not a major focus for Taiwan and studies similar to the FDA's are not currently being undertaken by Taiwan authorities. Following are the DOH responses to specific questions that Post discussed and passed in writing during the meeting:

1. Is your government (a) aware of and (b) accepting of the findings of the U.S. FDA, the New Zealand Food Safety Authority and EFSA on the safety of food products derived from animal clones and their offspring?

Answer: The DOH representatives said they were aware of the FDA's report but stopped short of accepting the findings. While not doubting the FDA's conclusions they said Taiwan authorities would need to conduct their own study that would also be subject to an interagency review process and public comments. They requested the "original documents" that resulted in the FDA's conclusions and these documents could possibly form the foundation for their own study. They also said it is too early to say Europeans support the consumption of products from cloned animals despite the European Food Safety Authority findings. DOH expects substantial opposition to emerge, and plans to investigate these views with responsible offices of EU members as it considers this further.

Comment: The DOH representatives thought there would be concerns over environmental impact and animal diseases from counterpart authorities within Taiwan's Council of Agriculture (COA).

2. Is your government proactively planning to institute any sort of regulatory oversight over (a) cloned animals and their products, or (b) the offspring of cloned animals and their products?

Currently Taiwan is not planning any sort of regulatory oversight over cloned animals and their products or the offspring of cloned animals and their products. However the need for more regulatory oversight could arise if products from cloned animal products become commercially available.

Comment: We ascertained from the discussion that there is potential that food derived from cloned animals would be subject to the same regulations as food derived from GM crops. The FDA study was submitted to Taiwan's Biotechnology Advisory Committee for review. It should be noted that we made it clear that Clones and transgenic animals are separate issues that may warrant rethinking by DOH on where it assigns and how it conducts the review.

3. Is your government considering any requirements related to the labeling of products from either cloned animals or their offspring?

Comment: The potential exists for labeling regulations similar to those instituted for GM Foods. DOH speculated that their review could eventually reach the same conclusion as FDA and others, but still require labeling as a matter of responding to consumer concerns and their right to information.